



National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Goddard Space Flight Center

Wallops Flight Facility, Wallops Island, Virginia

Inside Wallops

Volume XX-00

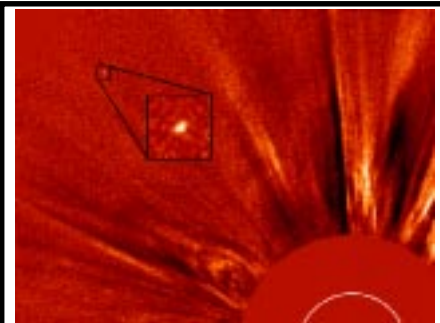
Number: 06

Feb. 14, 2000

SOHO Spacecraft Bags 102 Comets

In just four years of operation, the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) spacecraft has found 102 comets, making it by far the most successful comet-hunter in history.

Calculations have shown that the latest comets discovered with SOHO are previously unknown comets. The 102nd comet was observed by Dr. Douglas Biesecker, of SM&A, Vienna, Va., and NASA's Goddard Space



SOHO Comet 100

Flight Center, a member of the SOHO team personally responsible for 45 of the discoveries.

A cooperative project between the European Space Agency and NASA, SOHO has revolutionized solar science. It also revealed an amazing number of

suicidal comets plunging into the solar atmosphere.

Like nearly all of SOHO's comet discoveries, the latest comet showed up in images from the Large Angle and Spectrometric Coronagraph instrument. This is a set of coronagraphs that view the space around the Sun out to 12.5 million miles, while blotting out the bright solar disk with masks.

Ten comets discovered by SOHO, including SOHO # 100, 101 and 102, passed the Sun at a safe distance. However, the rest of the SOHO comets vaporized in the solar atmosphere.

Life is perilous for a sungrazer. The mixture of ice and dust that makes up a comet's nucleus is heated like the proverbial snowball in hell, and it can survive its visit to the Sun only if it is quite large. What's more, the strong tidal effect of the Sun's gravity can tear the loosely glued nucleus apart. The disruption that created the many SOHO sungrazers was similar to the fate of Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9, which went too close to Jupiter and broke up into many pieces that eventually fell into the massive planet in 1994.

A Message from Director, Al Diaz.....

NASA Administrator Dan Goldin has provided details, contained within the President's FY 2001 Budget Proposal, that are important to the Goddard Space Flight Center. I plan to provide you with an outline of this information through Goddard News, and, as in the past, I will provide you with status reports as the President's budget proposal proceeds through the Congress. (The proposed NASA 2001 budget can be found at: http://www.nasa.gov/newsinfo/2001_budget.html)

The Administrator also announced several significant personnel changes that will have an immediate effect at GSFC. The first has to do with the reassignment of Brian Keegan, Director of Applied Engineering and Technology (AETD), and Orlando Figueroa, Director of Systems, Technology and Advanced Concepts (STAAC) to agency leadership positions at NASA Headquarters. Brian has been named the NASA Chief Engineer and Orlando has been named as his Deputy for Systems Engineering.

I plan to do a broad search for Brian and Orlando's successors. In the meantime, I have asked Rick Obenschain and

Mike Ryschkewitsch, to fill the vacancies in AETD and STAAC in an "Acting" capacity. Both have agreed, and I look forward to working with them.

In addition, the Administrator also announced the appointment of Mary Cleave to the position of Deputy Associate Administrator for Program Formulation in the Office of Earth Sciences. Mary has made valuable contributions to GSFC missions including SEAWIFS on which she served as project manager and recently Program Formulation manager for GSFC's Biology Initiative in Code 900.

I also am pleased to announce that after an extended search and evaluation process, I have selected Dr. John Campbell as the new Director for Flight Programs and Projects (Code 400). I have worked with John for many years in his capacity as a leader on the Hubble Space Telescope and most recently as the Associate Director for Space Science Observatories in Code 400.

I ask that you join me in congratulating the GSFC Executives appointed to these important NASA leadership positions.

Wallops on the Road

Dave Wilcox, Shuttle Small Payloads Project Office, spoke to first grade students at Broadwater Academy on Feb. 4 about the Space Shuttle.

On Feb. 9, the following Wallops employees served as judges for a science fair held at Berlin Intermediate School: George Postell, Aircraft Office; Mike Singer, DynCorp; Allison Schauer, Science and Engineering Services and Rick Baldwin, Virginia Spaceport Authority.

On Feb. 10, Randy Carrier, PRC, participated in the Beers Elementary School, Washington, D.C., Engineering Day Program.

M-5 Launch Failure

Japan's Institute of Space and Astronautical Science reported that the Japanese M-5 launch vehicle was launched at 8:30 p.m. EST on Feb. 9, 2000, from Kagoshima Space Center.



M-5 rocket used to launch Astro-E positioned for flight.

The M-5 vehicle failed in injecting the fifth ISAS X-ray satellite ASTRO-E into planned orbit. The ASTRO-E may have burnt up in the dense atmosphere.

The prime instrument on

Astro-E was the X-ray Spectrometer (XRS), developed jointly by NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and Japan's Institute of Space and Astronautical Science.

The XRS represented an entirely new technology in X-ray detection that would not only have enabled breakthroughs in high-energy astrophysics but also served as a test bed for future missions.

Goddard's Dr. Stephen Holt, NASA Project Scientist for Astro-E, said the launch failure was "a great loss to the community." He added, "I've never been more proud of an association than with those who worked on Astro-E."

Dr. Nick White, head of the Laboratory for High Energy Astrophysics at Goddard said, "This is a devastating loss for the lab, the X-ray group, our colleagues in Japan and for X-ray astronomy."

Tips from the Gardner

It's about time to start thinking about which of last years plants you want to grow again and which news ones you'd like to try out and get the seeds going. Starting your own seeds is a great way to try out new and unusual varieties.



If you saved some of last year's seeds, it's a good idea to do a germination test on them to see that they'll still grow. Wrap a few seeds of the same kind in a moist paper towel and place it in a plastic bag. Label and seal the bag. Then place it in a warm location. After about a week, check the seeds. If none have germinated, check again in another week. By this time some of the seeds should have begun to grow, if not, it's time to get new seeds. If only a few have germinated, either get more or sow them thickly to make sure you'll have enough.

Now's the time to take inventory of your gardening supplies and disinfect pots and trays. If you use fluorescent tubes to grow your transplants, check to see the bulbs are in good condition. Any that older than 3 years should be replaced. Over time light intensity decreases and can result in leegy seedlings. Regular cool white fluorescent tubes are fine for seedlings that will only be indoors about four weeks. For plants, you intend to grow longer than this, use full-spectrum grow lights for the best results.

NASCAR's Superbowl! The Daytona 500

See it on the Big Screen

The spirited fun begins when the doors open at the Rocket Club at 11 a.m. and continues until the checked flag falls at Daytona.



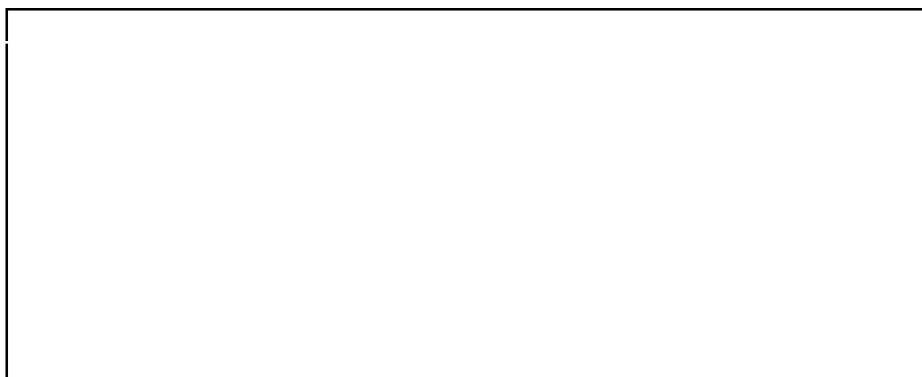
Admission to the "Club" is a covered dish or other food. Register the names of any guests with Terry Ewell, x1133 or Sandy Gunter, x1454.

Come prepared to cheer on your favorite driver or the winning driver, if you prefer.

Wallops Shorts.....

During the period Feb. 3 to Feb. 9 the Wallops Fire Department responded to one fire alarm and 23 airport standbys.

Mark your calendar for a St. Patrick's Day Celebration (March 17), dinner and dance, featuring "Why Not Mike". Dinner will be from 6 to 8 p.m. and will include corned beef, chicken, cabbage, potatoes, rolls and dessert. Tickets for the dinner and dance are \$15. Dinner only is \$12. Dance only is \$3. Reservations must be made by March 10. Call Pam Milbourne, x2020 or Sandy Gunter, 1454.



"Heritage and Horizon: The African American Legacies and Challenges of the 21st Century"

The Wallops Black History Club presents an evening of dinner and entertainment.

February 19, 2000 5 p.m. to midnight
Bldg. D-10

Contact Sandra Banks, x2526 or Rebecca Beach, x1559

Astronomy and the Underground Railroad Featured

A program relating the role astronomy played in the Underground Railroad will be presented for elementary and middle school students between Feb. 14 and 25 at the NASA Visitor Center.

During the hour-long Black History Month program, students will learn about star constellations and the important part the "Big Dipper" played in guiding slaves in the South to freedom in the North. The multi-curriculum program provides information in science, social studies, geography and music as students map the path of the Underground Railroad.

Approximately 2,000 students from Maryland and Virginia will take part in the program.

Federal Women's Program New Officers

The Federal Women's Program (FWP) Committee has announced the selection of the following new officers for 2000: Chairperson - Pam Pittman, Advanced Architectures & Automation Branch; Correspondence Officer - Micaela Barnhill, Computer Sciences Corp.; and Budget Officer - Joan Murden, Aircraft Office. The Wallops FWP Manager is Patricia Pruitt, Management Operations Directorate. Other committee members are Sandra Banks, Observational Science Branch; Sandy Bogan and Donna Smith, Real-Time Software Engineering Branch; Maria Caballero, Orbital Science Corp.; Virginia Strand, Computer Sciences Corp.; Beverly Hall, NSI Technology; Brenda Harrie, Range and Mission Management Office; Lisa Johnson, Equal Opportunity Program Office; and Bonnie Maxfield, Carrier Systems Branch.

Members of the FWP are available to discuss the FWP's mission at Wallops and to address concerns about career development, mentoring, sexual harassment or discrimination.

The FWP Committee sponsors Take Our Daughters to Work Day, Federal Women's Day and Women's History Month.

Library Corner

* Copies of the 1999 NASA Spinoff are currently available in the Library. Come in and pick up a copy before they are all gone.

* The Scientific and Engineering Colloquia that we show every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon at 3 p.m. has not gotten the response we expected. If there is anything we could do to improve participation in these presentations, please let us know by calling Sam Hall, x1065 or email the Library at: dhall@library.gsfc.nasa.gov

* All of the Library's computers have been upgraded and are now Internet accessible. We now have four patron terminals, so there is never a wait.



* We have a new Easy Language CD Rom for those of you who travel and need to brush up on your skills. It includes essential vocabulary in 17 major languages.

* Our Conference Room is available for meetings. To schedule the Conference Room, call x1065 or x1150.

For Sale

1993 Oldsmobile Cutlass Cierra, \$4,300 - Good Condition. Call (757) 787-7290 after 5:30 p.m.



Inside Wallops is an official publication of Goddard Space Flight Center and is published by the Wallops Office of Public Affairs, Extension 1584, in the interest of Wallops employees.

Editor
Photography
Printing

Betty Flowers
Optical Section
Printing Management Office